

Wanderers off to the sun

Roast beef to eat

WORN out by two five hour coach journeys, Wycombe Wanderers can have no complaints about the hospitality in Italy so far. In fact, it's been marvellous, writes Stuart Earp.

Pistoiese chairman Marcello Melani wined and dined the players after the match with as much food and drink as they wanted, while officials — including yours truly — were given a special banquet at one of Italy's most famous hotels — The Hotel Le Grand Le Pace. On the menu was good old English roast beef straight from the chairman's farm.

The flight-out, although late, went smoothly to Milan the V.C.9 flying at 29,000 feet and 500 knots. The first night was spent in Monte Cattini but the tourists then moved down to the seaside resort of Riccione.



Members of the Wycombe Wanderers touring party prepare to board the coach which left Loakes Park for Heathrow Airport on Friday evening. Several other players joined them at the airport before they flew off to Italy.

BLUES FALL TO LATE WINNER

WYCOMBE Wanderers' hopes of reaching the final of the Anglo-Italian competition in Italy this week took a dive at Pistoiese on Saturday when they lost the first of their two matches. A goal three minutes from time brought their downfall but on the night Wycombe can have no arguments about the result.

With 4-0 and 1-0 victories under their belts over Pistoiese and Teramo at Loakes Park last month, the Blues must have been gambling on a good result in Pistoiese.

But things went wrong for them from the start. Over one hour's delay in take-off from Heathrow Airport completely upset the schedule and meant the tourists, who are in Italy for 10 days, did not get to bed until five o'clock in the morning and that after a five hour coach journey through an electrical storm.

So the players who trained in the morning were hardly fit for action come 8.30 p.m., and the side that took the field was lacking three vital players. Paul Birdseye had to cry off from the tour at the last minute, Mick Holifield was unable to tour while Terry Reardon was injured at an accident at work last week.

With six guests already in

the 16 man squad Wycombe obviously struggled to get their game together. However, the overriding reason for Wycombe's defeat must be the skill of Pistoiese.

Trounced 4-0 at Loakes Park they were a transformed side on Saturday. Most people expected them to show more skill on home soil, but they dominated this game, enjoying over 70 per cent of the play.

Certainly Blues could have no complaints about the facilities. Their stadium, which holds 30,000, was in perfect condition and as flat as a billiard table. Who could they really blame the referee

while the passing is deadly accurate. Above all they had at least two players supporting the man in possession. It was impressive football and made a mockery of their defensive performance at Loakes Park.

With a makeshift side there was little Wycombe could do but defend. This they did admirably with their fair share of luck until the closing stages, but the margin of defeat could well have been a lot more.

After only 28 minutes manager Brian Lee substituted Bobby Davies with John Priestley and moved Dave Alexander to right back. Davies, who will sign for the Blues next

season had a torrid time in this unfamiliar position.

At half time Wycombe had every reason to feel happy with the 0-0 scoreline. Thanks to the sterling effort of John Delaney and Keith Mead they had a sound base for the second half and although Peter Watson disappointed, there was always the chance they might snatch a goal.

But instead it was Pistoiese who took complete control of the game and only an acrobatic clearance off the line by Delaney kept them out in the 49th minute. Eight minutes later Wycombe's luck held when Emanuele Gattelli swerved a lovely free-kick on to the cross bar with Maskell helpless.

Helped by a 3,000 crowd, Pistoiese began to turn on all their magic and Maskell pulled off good saves from Gattelli and Paesano.

Gattelli was booked for a peculiar incident when he remonstrated with the crowd — this had nothing to do with anything on the field.

With the seconds ticking away it seemed Wycombe had done enough to take one point until yet another fast break by the Italians gave them a three against three situation. Paesano's shot was blocked by Maskell but Marzio Magli followed up to slot the ball home.

Dylan Evans saw a volley scrambled away but Wycombe's best effort came from John Butterfield who sent in a 20 yard left foot drive which Sergio Settini tipped away for a corner.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; R. Davies (sub. J. Priestley 28 mins.), J. Delaney, K. Mead, J. Butterfield, H. Kennedy, D. Alexander, P. Watson (sub. M. Gilligan 88 mins.), D. Evans, S. Perrin, Subs: P. Spittle, T. Reardon (not used).

'Dons' still ahead

WYCOMBE Wanderers were in good company over the weekend because four of the six English clubs taking part in the Anglo-Italian tournament fell to defeat.

The two exceptions were Wimbledon and Nuneaton, one of whom is likely to be England's representative in Sunday's final.

Wimbledon drew 1-1 with Benevento while Nuneaton held Syracuse to a goalless draw. Wycombe still have a chance of reaching the final. They must beat Teramo tomorrow (Wednesday) to have the slightest chance of overtaking the other two clubs. For full details of the Teramo match read Stuart Earp's comprehensive report in Friday's Bucks Free Press.

Anglo-Italian Cup results: Pistoiese 1, Wycombe Wanderers 0; Monza 2, Scarborough 1; Udinese 6, Stafford 2; Syracuse 0, Nuneaton 0; Benevento 1, Wimbledon 1; Teramo 2, Enfield 1.

LATEST TABLES

ENGLISH CLUBS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wimbledon	3	2	1	0	8	1	7
Nuneaton	3	2	0	1	4	0	7
Wycombe	3	2	0	1	5	6	6
Scarborough	3	1	1	2	5	2	4
Stafford	3	1	0	2	5	9	3
Enfield	3	0	2	1	2	3	2

ITALIAN CLUBS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monza	3	1	1	1	3	2	4
Teramo	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Pistoiese	3	1	1	1	2	5	4
Udinese	3	1	0	2	8	9	3
Benevento	3	0	1	2	1	6	2
Syracuse	3	0	1	2	0	8	1